

NewsRelease

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

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December 30, 2003

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RELEASE NO. 03-089

NOTE TO EDITORS:

NASA LANGLEY MEDIA AVAILABILITY AFTER MARS LANDING

The first of two Mars Exploration Rover (MER) spacecraft will land on the surface of Mars at approximately 11:35 p.m. EST Saturday, Jan. 3, after a seven-month trip from Earth. No later than Sunday evening, MER controllers at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, in Pasadena, Calif., hope to hear the first signals from the spacecraft indicating a successful landing.

On Jan. 5, from 1-2 p.m. at NASA Langley, a MER spokesperson will be available to address Langley's role in the Mars Exploration Rover (MER) mission. This will likely include how Langley is helping fine-tune the entry, descent and landing sequence of the second spacecraft, due to land on the Martian surface shortly after midnight EST the morning of Jan. 25. Based on observations of the first landing, JPL and Langley engineers may decide to alter the spacecraft trajectory or adjust the timing of one or more landing events for the second entry.

NASA Langley's support of the MER entry, descent and landing system has substantially expanded the Center's traditional planetary exploration roles of capsule flight dynamics, aerodynamics and aero-heating. In addition, Langley supported the MER mission in areas of parachute analyses and testing, multi-body trajectory simulation and spacecraft assembly, test and launch operations.

For information and images regarding Mars Exploration Rover (MER) on the Internet, visit:

<http://www.jpl.nasa.gov/mer>

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